Saint Paul Planning Commission Central Corridor Resource Center 1080 University Avenue West

Minutes July 25, 2008

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, July 25, 2008, at 8:30 a.m. in the Central Corridor Resource Center.

Commissioners Mmes. Donnelly-Cohen, Faricy, Lu, Morton; Smitten, Wencl; and

Present: Messrs. Alton, Barrera, Bellus, Goodlow, Gordon, Johnson, Kramer, Margulies,

Nelson, Spaulding, and Ward.

Commissioners

Absent:

Ms. *Porter, and Mr. *Commers

*Excused

Also Present: Allan Torstenson for the Planning Administrator, Lucy Thompson, Donna

Drummond, Luis Pereira, Christina Morrison, Emily Goodman, Shelley Miller, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes July 11, 2008.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Barrera moved approval of the minutes of July 11, 2008. Commissioner Wencl seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

II. Chair's Announcements

Chair Alton announced that Commissioner Dennis Rosemark has resigned He has taken a position as Councilmember Harris's Legislative Aide in the Ward 3 office, replacing John Marshall. We are sorry to see him leave, but glad to know he is continuing to be involved in city activities. Chair Alton also announced that there is a Capitol Region Watershed District "Day on the River" on September 9, 2008, from 2:30-5:30 p.m. to discuss Capitol Region Watershed issues. He distributed a card with more information for commissioners who are interested.

III. Planning Administrator's Announcements

In the absence of Larry Soderholm, Allan Torstenson reported that there were no business items from the Commission on last Wednesday's City Council agenda, and next week there is no meeting because it is a fifth Wednesday.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING: Central Corridor Station Area Plans: Rice, Dale and Lexington. Items from the Neighborhood Planning Committee. (Donna Drummond, 651/266-6556)

Chair Alton announced that the City of Saint Paul Planning Commission is holding a public hearing on the Central Corridor Station Area Plans for Rice, Dale, and Lexington. He indicated comments would also be accepted on the Introduction Chapter and the

Implementation Chapter. Notice of the public hearing was mailed to the Early Notification System list and all property owners within the station areas.

Donna Drummond, PED, presented an overview of the station area plans, explaining how the plans are organized, the planning process, and the key issues addressed in each plan, and overarching principles that guide the plans. The plans provide direction for both private and public investment along the corridor. Ms. Drummond said that the plans represent an overall vision as to the desired locations for green space, higher-density development, improvements to bike and pedestrian pathways, and public art. She explained the respective roles of the City and Metropolitan Council in the Central Corridor LRT project. The City has been working very closely with the Met Council on preliminary engineering, and will continue to do so throughout final engineering and design.

Ms. Drummond said she received comment letters from A-1 Vacuum Cleaner Co., the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board, and Saint Paul Smart Trips and these letters were distributed to the Planning Commission.

Chair Alton read the rules of procedure for the public hearing.

The following people spoke on the **Rice** Station:

- 1. Mr. Paul Mandell, 50 Sherburne Avenue, Saint Paul, MN, representing Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB). Mr. Mandell passed out a letter, which he read from with their response to specific text and graphics as documented in the June 13, 2008 draft of the Rice Street Station Area Plan.
- 2. Mr. Steve Boland, 533 Dale Street, Saint Paul, MN, representing the Greater Frogtown CDC. Mr. Boland said the work that's been done in the station area plans is the result of extremely good community-based discussion. What's come out of this is a vision that may not be the final product, but helps provide directions that people in the community can really see, visualize and work with. The Greater Frogtown CDC wants to endorse the general directions and concepts. Part of the CDC's mission is bring to the table and work with the private sector, the public sector and the community to make these solutions a reality. The CDC's main concern is the elimination of on-street parking and other parking issues. Mr. Boland has had conversations with Metropolitan Council staff and they have offered to come out and talk with people more in-depth about the parking issue. There is going to be a parking issues meeting at the Rondo Library on Monday July 28, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. Everyone with parking concerns is welcome to come.

The following people spoke on the **Lexington** Station:

1. Ms. Janice Rettman, Ramsey County Board of Commissioners, 15 West Kellogg Blvd., Saint Paul, MN. Ms. Rettman represents part of the Central Corridor route in Saint Paul (including all of Frogtown and the North End and parts of the Summit-University and Midway area). Ms. Rettman read from a letter, which was distributed to the Planning Commission, regarding parking and other issues. She also thanked the Planning Commission for the opportunity to respond to the Central Corridor LRT Station Area Plans.

2. Mr. Chris Wood, speaking on behalf of Lexington-Hamline Community Council, 1216 Selby Avenue, Saint Paul, MN. Mr. Wood said that they are very impressed with the Lexington Station Area Plan and the way it has incorporated the comments of their community members, board members and staff. Mr. Wood said that this is a special area with a great deal of under-utilized space that is likely to undergo significant redevelopment. Having a vision for this area is essential. The changes that take place will affect the business and homeowners in the area. He said the study area technically does not include the bridges that cross the freeway. The pedestrian bridges are scary, poorly lit and in need of some work. Mr. Wood discussed mitigation, the street grid, parking, and bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

The following people spoke on the **Dale** Station:

1. Vanessa Levingston, 884 Iglehart Avenue, Saint Paul, MN. Ms. Levingston said that the overall process has been one where there are some great designs for the different stations. But she feels the process lacked true community involvement. Some of the things that were of true concern were not addressed. It is one thing to say that you have community involvement, but it is another to actually have community involvement. You can invite the community to be there, but if you don't listen to them and address their issues, then they are just present. So then you have community presence not community involvement.

Chair Alton asked Ms. Levington if she has specific issues that she thinks need to be addressed, to please submit them in writing to the Neighborhood Planning Committee and/or Planning Commission

2. Forrest J. Kelly, 941 Albemarle Street, Saint Paul, MN. Mr. Kelly works for the Capitol Region Watershed District and he wanted to comment on stormwater management and the station area plans. Whenever there is consideration of new green or open spaces, the City needs to think about storm water management and incorporating that into the design. This includes all of the station area plans along the LRT corridor specifically, and working with Metropolitan Council to achieve the required standards for storm water management.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Wencl moved to close the public hearing, with all written testimony to be submitted by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, July 25, 2008, and to refer the matter back to the Neighborhood Planning Committee for review and recommendation. Commissioner Ward seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

NOTE: Steve Boland with Greater Frogtown CDC was granted permission to submit comments after the parking meeting being held with Metropolitan Council on Monday night July 28, 2008.

V. Zoning Committee

NO OLD BUSINESS

NO NEW BUSINESS

Chair Morton announced the Zoning Committee's Agenda for the July 31, 2008 meeting.

VI. Comprehensive Planning Committee

<u>Transportation Chapter</u> – Recommendation to release draft plan for public review and set public hearing date for October 3, 2008. (*Christina Morrison*, 651/266-6546)

Commissioner Donnelly-Cohen said the committee reviewed the Transportation Chapter at its last meeting, but this item was omitted from the Commission's published agenda due to a miscommunication.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Donnelly-Cohen moved the Comprehensive Planning Committee's recommendation to release the draft for public review and set a public hearing for October 3, 2008. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

VII. Neighborhood and Current Planning Committee

Commissioner Wencl had no business to report.

VIII. Communications Committee

"Tour" of City of Saint Paul web site – Instruction on finding planning materials and reports. (Luis Pereira, 651/266-6591 and Emily Goodman, 651-266-6551)

Commissioner Smitten announced that the City launched a new, updated website about three months ago. The Communications Committee requested that staff give a brief background and orientation of the revised website with particular emphasis on its Planning Commission component.

Emily Goodman, PED staff, gave a presentation about the City's new website. She covered some of its history and the "how-to" of the website. She emphasized how easy it is to navigate around the site.

IX. Task Force Reports

Commissioner Johnson, Chair of the Station Area Planning Task Force, said he wanted to offer staff member Donna Drummond the opportunity to respond to one of the speakers' comments at this morning's public hearing because this was one of the most extensive public involvement processes the Planning Commission has ever done. One of the speakers left a perhaps misleading impression, and seeing that Ms. Drummond talked to this person afterward, she may be able to shed more light on the speaker's concerns.

Ms. Drummond clarified the speaker's issue. It is the three additional infill stations. She wanted a forum to talk about adding stations at Western, Victoria and Hamline, and that was not specifically a part of this process but rather is within the scope of the LRT project itself, which is the Metropolitan Council's responsibility. However, Ms. Drummond indicated that the community has been told of the City's intention to complete station area plans for the Western, Victoria and Hamline stations, because the Metropolitan Council has made the commitment to put in the base infrastructure to add those stations as part of the project scope, and these stations will be built out as future funding becomes available. There is currently a lot of pressure on the Metropolitan Council to find a way to add at least one of these three stations now as part of the preliminary engineering package. However, the budget is very tight; whether it will happen

sooner or later is a matter of funding and timing.

Commissioner Bellus expressed his concern over the parking issue; there seems to be a lot of frustration on this issue and he would like to know how is this going to be addressed.

Ms. Drummond said that the station area plans include an implementation chapter, called "Moving Forward". It contains ideas and recommendations on how to manage parking better in the future. The plans don't specifically address the loss of on-street parking due to the LRT project, but they address more generally ways to share and manage the existing parking and how to plan for new parking. The plans lay a good foundation for moving ahead on specific ideas for addressing parking along the Central Corridor.

More discussion followed.

Commissioner Smitten wanted to know what the next steps are.

Ms. Drummond said that the public hearing comments will be going to the Neighborhood Planning Committee. Staff will be summarizing the public testimony and responding with staff recommendations for the committee to consider. The Neighborhood Planning Committee has tentatively targeted that for its meeting on August 13.

Commissioner Faricy announced that the Ford Plant will remain open for a couple of years. The work that the task force did in the last year was great. They came up with five good scenarios. If Ford does close the plant within a few years, the scenarios are a wonderful beginning for any redevelopment process. On the other hand, if Ford decides to retrofit the plant and keep it open, everyone will be pleased to retain high-paying industrial jobs in the city. As far as the task force itself is concerned, most of the members are still interested in the Ford Plant. They live in Highland Park or nearby and would like to stay involved and return to action if and when Ford announces the plant will be closed.

Commissioner Gordon announced that the Star Board interviewed the applicants and had its bus tour of the proposed sites. On August 13, 2008, the Star Board will review and rank the applications and then make its recommendations.

X. Old Business

None

XI. New Business

None

XII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:08 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary Planning and Economic Development Department, City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,	Approved
	(Date)
Larry Soderholm, AICP	 Marilyn Porter
Planning Administrator	Secretary of the Planning Commission

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